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PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Results of the review of entitlements carried out by subsidiary bodies that have not fully utilized their meeting entitlements, including the duration of their sessions; review of the problems and factors involved in bodies whose utilization factor was below the benchmark figure for at least three sessions

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

II. REVIEW OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES THAT HAVE NOT FULLY UTILIZED THEIR MEETING ENTITLEMENTS, INCLUDING THE DURATION OF THEIR SESSIONS

N. United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Working Group on International Contract Practices, Working Group on Electronic Data Interchange and Working Group on Insolvency Law

1. The three working groups of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) have reported that some of the time lost owing to early ending in the statistics was due to informal consultations called for by their chairmen. They are of the view that efforts should be made to optimize the use of conference-servicing resources, in particular by starting meetings on time.

2. To that end, delegates to recent UNCITRAL meetings have been reminded of the need to make the most effective use of the conference-servicing resources allocated to them. Recent UNCITRAL meetings held at Vienna show a considerable

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increase in the use of such resources. For example, the utilization factor of the twentieth session of the Working Group on Insolvency Law, held in October 1996, was 89 per cent, and the utilization factor of the thirty-first session of UNCITRAL, held in May 1997, is also expected to exceed the benchmark by a considerable margin.

III. REVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS AND FACTORS INVOLVED IN BODIES WHOSE UTILIZATION FACTOR WAS BELOW THE BENCHMARK FIGURE FOR AT LEAST THREE SESSIONS

D. Committee on Information

3. On 7 July 1997, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences held consultations with the Chairman of the Committee on Information. The statistical record of the Committee on Information over the past three years was reviewed. The Chairman of that Committee noted that, given the nature of the subject-matter it considered, delegations did not always participate actively in the discussion early on, preferring instead to make their statements after following the course of the debate. That state of affairs was a factor that resulted in early adjournments and thus low utilization of conference-servicing resources.

4. However, in 1997, inasmuch as public information was part of the reform initiative of the Secretary-General, it was anticipated that more active participation could be expected and that more efficient use would be made of the conference-servicing resources available to the Committee. It was also pointed out that fewer meetings had been requested for 1997 on the basis of previous utilization statistics.

5. The Chairman assured the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences that the matters raised during the consultations would be communicated to the Bureau and the members of the Committee on Information.